

VZCZCXRO1801  
OO RUEHDE RUEHROV RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHNR #0990 0601445  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 011445Z MAR 07  
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7892  
INFO RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/CJTJF HOA  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 000990

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S FRAZER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/01/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PREF](#) [ASEC](#) [MOPS](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)

SUBJECT: Somali Insurgents Switch to Assassinations

Classified by PolOff John O'Leary. Reason 1.4 (b) & (d).

REF: Nairobi 905

¶1. (C) Summary. Following a mortar and RPG attack last week on an Ethiopian encampment, insurgents this week have only attacked with hand grenades and personal weapons. The TFG Prime Minister's brother-in-law was among the assassinated. Banditry appears to be a growing problem in Mogadishu and throughout southern Somalia. Estimates of those having fled Mogadishu range from 10,000 to 15,000. The interior minister reportedly said that the TFG and the Ethiopians would no longer use indiscriminate artillery fire to retaliate against insurgent attacks. End summary.

¶2. (U) Since the mortar and RPG attack on the Ethiopian encampment at the former defense ministry building last Friday (2/23), the situation in Mogadishu has calmed considerably. The unknown insurgents did not follow up with attacks over the weekend.

¶3. (C) Insurgents resumed strikes on Monday, but we cannot be sure that they are the same ones who attacked the Ethiopians on Friday. The attackers this week have used more targeted attacks involving hand grenades and personal weapons (AK-47s and pistols) instead of the indiscriminate mortar shelling and RPG attacks prevalent since the insurgency began. It is too soon to conclude, however, that this change represents a definitive modification in insurgent tactics or whether separate groups are behind the different types of assaults.

¶4. (U) On Monday, February 26, insurgents used hand grenades against a police patrol killing one policeman and a civilian and wounding five others. In a separate incident, unidentified gunmen threw grenades at a police station; there were no reported casualties.

¶5. (C) On Tuesday, February 27, unidentified gunmen pulled over a car driven by Prime Minister Gedi's brother-in-law and, according to one report, fired close to 30 rounds into his body. In another incident, unidentified gunmen shot and killed the leader of a neighborhood watch group. In both instances, the assassins escaped. According to a source in Mogadishu, the neighborhood watch leader had been contacted the day before his death and told to support the insurgency or die.

¶6. (C) On Thursday, March 1, gunmen reportedly attacked the home of the Mogadishu port director. One attacker was killed and recognized as a relative of the director. Authorities are investigating whether this was a personal or insurgent attack.

¶7. (U) Banditry continues to flare both in Mogadishu and in the countryside, resulting in numerous deaths.

¶8. (U) Somali pirates hijacked an empty Kenyan food relief ship off the coast of Puntland on 2/25 and reportedly still hold it as of the afternoon of 3/1. Puntland Vice President Hassan Tahin Mahmond told EmbOffs on 2/28 that the pirated ship was "surrounded" in Puntland (Somali) waters. The VP said the pirates, the four reportedly already captured and those presumably still on the ship, would be tried in Puntland and the ship returned to its Kenyan owners.

¶9. (U) Families continue to leave Mogadishu to escape the violence, but estimates are difficult. As of February 22, UNHCR reported that at least 8,500 IDPs had fled Mogadishu since the beginning of the insurgency late last December. UN/OCHA reported on February 26 (just after the insurgent attack on the Ethiopian encampment) that more than 10,000 IDPs had fled, and UNHCR had an unconfirmed report that there could be as many as 15,000.

¶10. (C) A press report from AFP states that Interior Minister Mohamed Guled had announced on 2/28 that the TFG was talking to suspected insurgents in a bid to end the fighting. According to a press contact in Mogadishu, however, Guled actually said that the TFG and its Ethiopian backers would no longer retaliate against insurgent attacks with indiscriminate shelling of neighborhoods. The contact said this was an attempt to stem the flight of residents from the city.

Ranneberger